

## Islam in Uzbekistan: Implications of 9/11 and Policy Recommendations for the United States

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### **Abstract**

*This paper is about the implications of the events of September 11 on the state and life of Muslims of Uzbekistan. Tracing the history of Islam in Uzbekistan before the arrival of the Soviets and since then, the paper reviews the emergence of the classification of official and parallel Islam in the 1960s. The paper notes the resurgence of Islam in Uzbekistan following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the launching of several Islamic groups and parties such as the IMU in the country. Following the events of 1999 the government cracked down on the Islamic parties on suspicion of extremism and there were several outside players. The paper analyses the impact of the 9/11 events on Islam in Uzbekistan and then explores the future of Islam in the country. The paper concludes with observations regarding the historic nature of Islam in Uzbekistan and its resurgence as a natural evolutionary process, and it offers several recommendations to the US with regards to its policy in Uzbekistan.*

### **Introduction**

The tragic events of September 11, 2001 in the US and the resultant 'War on Terror' untied the hands of the present regime in Uzbekistan in its struggle against radical Islamic groups that the Uzbek president saw as a threat to the security and stability of Uzbekistan. In the last few years many innocent Muslims have been reported to have suffered as a result of the regime's short-sighted policy and its ignorance in distinguishing between mainstream moderate Islam and radical political Islam. The centuries-old authority and position of Islam have been damaged. After a short period of democratic process in Uzbekistan following the collapse of the Soviet Union, fear once again began to reign in the country, driving some moderate Muslims to radicalization. While in the rest of the world the US spearheaded the campaign against international terrorism and religious extremism, Uzbekistan had already been long conducting purges and repressing its own citizens. In Uzbekistan such a process was a political response to Islam's resurgence and the 1999 terrorist bomb attacks in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent. The September 11 attacks and Uzbekistan's ever closer relations with the US following 'Operation Enduring Freedom' in Afghanistan merely released the Karimov regime from greater accountability before the world community for its repressive policy towards its Muslim citizens.

Why has the US failed to prevent Uzbekistan from operating in such an authoritarian and undemocratic manner, given its repeatedly stated intention of spreading democracy

and respect for human dignity throughout the world? What is the reason behind this seeming contradiction between ideology and practice?

### **Islam Before the Soviets**

It is worth noting that Uzbekistan did not exist in its current form during the Tsarist<sup>1</sup> Russian reign of Central Asia and did not appear as a state until seven years after the Bolsheviks<sup>2</sup> took power in 1917. Thus, when I speak of Islam in Uzbekistan, I am addressing the territory that became Soviet Uzbekistan, which at that time was largely represented by the three khanates, Bukhara, Kokand and Khiva, simultaneously acting as protectorates of the Russian Tsar. The population was over 90% Muslim; the other 10% was comprised of Ashkenazi Jews who had lived there for centuries and Orthodox Russians who had more recently migrated to the region. Local Sunni Muslims belonged to the Hanafi School of thought<sup>3</sup> and also practiced Sufism:

... a form of Islamic mysticism that preached direct communion with God and tolerance towards all other forms of worship.<sup>4</sup>

Russians introduced Western ideas and sciences to the region. These new ideas found an audience with some Muslims, thus paving the way for the Jadid Movement which consisted of reform-minded Muslims who advocated religious reform, national self-determination, modern education and an understanding of the sciences. The Jadids' new ideas were met with resistance by the Ulema<sup>5</sup> who saw these new ideas as a menace to the conservative interpretation of the Shari'a<sup>6</sup>, and were also met by resistance by the Bolsheviks who viewed the Jadids as anti-Russian and nationalistic. The Tsarist regime's general attitude towards the region was that of non-interference with the practice of Islam in Central Asia (called Turkestan at that time). Muslims could observe their religious holidays, pray five times a day, go to mosques, perform hajj<sup>7</sup>, wear religious or national clothes, and continue the practice of veiling women and limiting them to the domestic sphere.

### **Islam in Soviet Uzbekistan**

With the victory of the Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution in 1917 came an opportunity for the Jadids to reach their goals and realize their hopes for their religion and community. Beguiled by the Bolsheviks' promise of equal distribution of wealth and right to self-determination, some Jadids began to support them and urged other Muslims to do the same. The region's indigenous people, most of them Turkic speaking, sought to create a unified state of Turkistan within the Soviet Union by proclaiming a republic uniting the Muslims of Central Asia, an idea pushed for by the Jadids. This way they wanted to preserve their Turkic and most importantly Muslim identity. However the idea did not fit into the Bolshevik policy in Central Asia which opposed any kind of religious or ethnic movement that could endanger their position in the region. So the movement for a unified Muslim state was ruthlessly crushed.<sup>8</sup>

While Tsarist Russia brought only technology and industry to the region without interfering with the local population's lifestyle, the Bolsheviks, who replaced the Tsarist administration in the region, sought to reform the minds of the Muslims as well—to educate them, to rid them of their old, Islamic lifestyle, which the new Soviet state viewed as the main reason for their backwardness, as well as to improve the status of women. Women were forced to remove their veils and attend schools, Shari'a was

replaced with secular law; the influence of the clergy was reduced, and excessively religious people were regarded as 'hostile elements'. This policy backfired and the region saw its first mujaheddins<sup>9</sup> who took arms against the Soviet system seeing it as a menace to Islam. In February 1918 an Islamic revolt led by the mullahs and clan leaders erupted as part of the Basmachi movement<sup>10</sup> as several independent Uzbek, Turkmen and Tajik guerilla groups supported by Britain<sup>11</sup> and the remnants of the White Guard<sup>12</sup> began a long battle against the Soviet regime which continued until 1929.<sup>13</sup> Many Basmachi leaders fled to Afghanistan.<sup>14</sup>

Drawing parallels between the Islamists of the 1920s and the present Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)—the modern time Basmachis too have fought against the neo-communist regime in Uzbekistan in an attempt to bring the country back to Islam. It should be noted that like the Basmachis, the IMU too is made up of Muslims of different nationalities and they too were supported from the outside (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia). In both cases such an Islamic rebellious phenomenon occurred exclusively in Central Asia and did not affect other Muslims of the Soviet Union (Chechens have fought for their independence and national survival rather than for Islam). Besides fighting the outsiders (Russians), the IMU, like the Basmachis, fought against the treacherous elements of the local population that 'betrayed' Islam by taking the side of the 'infidels'. Nevertheless, there is still a difference between them. While the Basmachis primarily fought against the external enemies (Russians), the IMU's focus is on the governments inside Central Asia.

In 1924 Uzbekistan was proclaimed a Soviet republic. Seventy years of Communist rule attempted to diminish the religion's role as a major part of the Muslim society's tradition. The number of mosques in Uzbekistan was greatly reduced, madrasahs were closed, people were discouraged from practicing Islam; and the Soviet Union's borders with Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey and later China were kept closed. The Soviet government attempted to reduce Islam to the status of a cult. The Uzbek alphabet was changed twice—from Arabic into Latin and from Latin into Cyrillic.<sup>15</sup> Islam in Uzbekistan existed in isolation from the rest of the Islamic world because of the Iron Curtain policy in the Soviet Union. However this did not stop the local population from observing religious holidays or from holding funeral and wedding ceremonies in accordance with Islamic traditions. Such ceremonies were held even for the country's late communist leaders. The practice of circumcision was not stopped either. Christian and Muslim cemeteries remained separate.

Realizing that the atheist regime could not fully eradicate Islam, the Soviet government instituted a state-controlled board of Muslims of Central Asia—the Muftiat.<sup>16</sup>

### **Official and Parallel Islam**

In the 1960s a new Soviet foreign policy of supporting certain Islamic regimes in the Middle East in order to counterbalance US and Israeli foreign policy required that the Soviet government treat its own Muslims better. With the opening of two official madrasahs in Tashkent and Bukhara and an Islamic Institute in Tashkent that educated mullahs, a new term emerged—'official' Islam. Some students were allowed to go abroad for further study and some people were even allowed to perform the Hajj.<sup>17</sup> Dignitaries from friendly Islamic states became frequent visitors to Uzbekistan. The Muftiat played the role of an intermediary between the State and the Central Asian Muslims.

However, all of these concessions were not sufficient and could satisfy the religious needs of only a small number of people, mainly elderly people. Some conservative

Muslims and descendants of prominent religious leaders began to implicitly challenge the regime-friendly Muftiat, which they viewed as collaborators with the Soviet regime. Official Islam was attacked by 'unofficial' Islam or 'parallel' Islam, as the French scholar Olivier Roy calls it.<sup>18</sup> Some official mullahs, however, had their initial education at the hands of the parallel mullahs so there was still a link between official and parallel Islam.

The Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan implicitly divided the Soviet Uzbek society into two. Its secular part, influenced by Soviet ideology, thought the war was for a just cause and saw the dushmans<sup>19</sup> as the main threat, whereas followers of parallel Islam sympathized with the Mujaheddin. Among these followers were some Soviet soldiers of Muslim origin who came back from the Afghan war with new ideas about the structure of an Islamic society and the role of Islam in society. Juma Namangani, later to become the military leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and one of the Taliban field commanders, was one such Soviet soldier.

### **Islam in Independent Uzbekistan**

#### *Emergence of Radical Groups: The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan*

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 came a resurgence of Islam in Uzbekistan. A short period of government transition during 1991–1993, from the Soviet system to the present system in Uzbekistan, created a curious mixture of democracy and anarchy. Uzbekistan was inundated with missionaries from various religious organizations, from the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon (or the 'Moonies') to the Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia. These groups attracted mostly young people, who had never known anything but the ideas of Communism. Suddenly the people of Uzbekistan were offered many options to fill the ideological void left by the collapse of the Soviet Union. The new government was not yet established and having failed to produce a new ideology in a timely fashion and its own religious institutions, it could not offer its citizens anything to fill that gap. Adding to the mere 89 mosques that existed at the time, hundreds of mosques were built with money from various Iranian, Saudi, Egyptian, Pakistani and Turkish individuals and organizations.<sup>20</sup> People readily believed the missionaries, because to Uzbek Muslims, isolated and indoctrinated by an atheistic regime, these Turks, Persians, and Saudis were 'real Muslims' coming from places close to the Prophet's land, where people freely practiced their religion, and adhered to the Muslim way of life. More and more people, including children, who could not even approach a mosque during Soviet rule, began attending mosques. For some, Islam was a popular trend and for others it was a comfort. For a few it was the re-discovery of their forefathers' religion and for others—a way to oppose a government they saw as oppressive.

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) emerged in late 1980s as the Adolat (Justice) party, at a time when the Soviet Union's collapse was causing conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Trans-Dniester, and Tajikistan. The break-up of the huge empire into fifteen separate states surprised many Soviet republican leaders. The USSR, once orderly managed and controlled, was now in the hands of fifteen different leaders who faced the challenge of adjusting their republican government structures to the realities of life and decentralized power.

During this time of great upheaval, Uzbekistan might have produced tens of IMUs, and yet, only one such movement emerged. The reason for this turn of events becomes clear when we consider the legacy of the Soviet Union's educational system. Although it suppressed free thinking, the Soviet secular system and education granted people intellectual and critical capabilities. Secular thinking and reasoning kept the masses from being unduly influenced by extremist and radical ideas. Another factor was the presence of a substantial number of non-Muslims—Russians, Koreans, Germans, Greeks, Jews—in Uzbekistan and, especially, in the capital, Tashkent. Had Uzbekistan been religiously monolithic like Pakistan and Iran or uneducated, illiterate, and under-developed like Afghanistan, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the revival of Islam, in addition to the former Communist Uzbekistan leadership's preservation of power, may have caused the emergence of many organizations like the IMU. The secular government may have been overthrown, as was the case with the Shah of Iran or Najibullah of Afghanistan. Uzbekistan is by almost 60 percent an agricultural state, however, and most people who lived in rural areas at that time were less developed, less literate, and more religious than the urban population. One can assume that a group like the IMU would be more likely to emerge in a rural area. Indeed, the Ferghana Valley became one such place. Home to almost one-quarter of Central Asia's population of 50 million, and located within the jurisdiction of three countries—Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan—the Ferghana Valley has historically been a stronghold of Islam. The Ferghana Valley used to be part of the Kokand Khanate before the 1917 Russian Revolution. The area is largely agricultural and densely populated: in some areas the density is 500–600 people per square kilometer. Only Southern China and Bangladesh have higher figures.<sup>21</sup> The Valley possesses a few natural resources, fertile land, and water. During the Soviet era, the land was damaged by the misuse of chemical fertilizers to grow cotton, one of the strategic crops. Although the Ferghana Valley is now divided by three sovereign nations, the region is plagued by economic problems. The per capita income of the Valley's residents is much lower than that of the residents of these countries' capital cities. At the beginning of the 1990s, when there was an ideological, power, and religious vacuum, all of these factors as well as the heightened activity of foreign Muslim missionaries contributed to the birth of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

During this time of great upheaval, several Islamic groups ('Tawba', 'Adolat Uyushmasi', 'Islom Lashkarlari') emerged in the Ferghana Valley. These groups were made up of people who would volunteer to keep the order in their towns. In the early 1990s, crime was on the rise in Uzbekistan due to the economic problems associated with the transitional period, due to the absence of a severe criminal code, and due to the impotence of the government militia to sustain order. These religious groups would monitor Muslims' moral behavior (proper Islamic attire for women, the observance of the Islamic pillars of faith, including prayer, etc). From the very beginning, their leaders' main purpose was the creation of an Islamic state in the Ferghana Valley. Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov responded by sending his special forces to Namangan to topple the Islamic groups. Some of their members, including their leaders Namangani and Yuldash, managed to flee the country.<sup>22</sup> Unlike Namangani, who settled in Tajikistan and fought in the Tajik civil war, Tahir Yuldash traveled to Afghanistan, passing through Tajikistan.

Later these two men founded the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan with two main objectives: to overthrow Karimov's secular regime and to create an Islamic state in Uzbekistan. The movement was assisted at various times by the Pakistani ISI,<sup>23</sup> the

Saudi intelligence service,<sup>24</sup> former Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan<sup>25</sup>, and the notorious Taliban and Osama bin Laden when the latter began his operations in Afghanistan. The Uzbek president suddenly found the problems of security far more important than those of the economy and took Islam's involvement in politics and foreign missionaries' influence on religious institutions in the country very seriously. This resulted in the closure of hundreds of mosques, some of them sponsored by Islamic missionaries and individuals from various countries. At this time the number of mosques was around 1500 as compared to only 84 during the Soviet period.

The once friendly relations with Iran and Turkey cooled, as President Karimov blamed them for giving sanctuary to members of the Uzbek religious and political opposition figures. The free flow of religious literature across the border was stopped. The Uzbek parliament passed a law in 1998 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations' that put restrictions on religious rights that were judged to be in conflict with national security, and that prohibited proselytizing, banned religious subjects in public schools, prohibited private teaching of religious principles, forbade the wearing of religious clothing in public by anyone other than clerics, required religious groups to obtain a license to publish or distribute materials, and prohibited the dissemination of materials containing ideas of religious extremism.

As the government saw the rise of Islam as a threat to its establishment, it began to undertake tougher measures against fundamentalists and even against moderates without making any distinction between them. The events of 16 February 1999, when the Uzbek capital Tashkent was shocked by its first ever terrorist attacks (within an hour five car bombs shook the city), the situation further deteriorated.<sup>26</sup> A government investigation put the blame on the IMU who later claimed responsibility. Since February 1999, approximately 8000 persons have been arrested and convicted on suspicion of Islamic extremism, and approximately 6500 remain incarcerated. While exact numbers are not available, observers believe that many prisoners have died in custody, primarily due to diseases such as tuberculosis.<sup>27</sup> Those arrested include members of underground religious movements like Hizb-ut-Tahrir and Akromiyya, which the government views as major external and internal threats to the country's security.

### **Outside Players**

In his book entitled *Jihad*, Ahmed Rashid recounts three instances of the Russian army's assistance in transporting some of the IMU members on helicopters to the Tajik-Afghan border. Russian assistance to Namangani can be explained in light of the corrupt nature of the current Russian political environment and imperial nature of the Russian military establishment. I have found two explanations for the Russian-IMU cooperation. Firstly, some of the Russian military stood to gain from the transit of drugs from Afghanistan via Tajikistan where 11,000 troops of the Russian 201st Division were based.<sup>28</sup> Although there is no direct evidence that Russian troops were involved in drug trafficking, Russian border guards have been accused of taking bribes for turning a blind eye on drug trafficking. My second explanation deals with the Russian military establishment's (mainly Russian 'hawks') geopolitical interests and concerns in Central Asia. Uzbekistan's President, Islam Karimov, has criticized the Russian government and media for exaggerating the threat of Islamic fundamentalism and the Taliban movement to regional security in order to be accepted in Central Asia as protectors and to impose their imperial policy. This in part caused Uzbekistan to withdraw from the CIS Collective Security Agreement in 1999.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless the Russians pursued their

goal of establishing a military presence in Central Asia and they may have used the IMU to apply pressure on the region in order for the Central Asian states to accept a Russian military presence.

Some Islamic organizations in a few countries also acted as outside players financing the IMU's activities and operations. Pakistani Jamaat-e-Islami, the Qatar Charity Society, the Saudi Islamic Salvation Foundation, the Ikhwan Al-Muslimun, and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) were such supporters. In the spring of 1999, an IMU delegation visited Saudi Arabia and received 270,000 dollars from the Ibrahim bin-Abdulaziz Ibrahim Foundation, a relief organization of the Saudi royal family. A few months later the Taliban allocated 50,000 dollars to support the families of the IMU members based in Afghanistan. In early August of the same year, Bin Laden's five personal envoys visited the village of Hoit in Tajikistan and delivered 130,000 dollars to Namangani. At that time, IMU fighters were carrying out incursions into Uzbekistan via southern Kyrgyzstan. A few weeks later, a meeting took place in Karachi between the members of Islamic organizations from Pakistan, Kuwait, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Kashmir, Uzbekistan and Chechnya. They agreed to raise two million dollars to support the Holy Jihad against Karimov's regime. In June of 2000, IMU's press-secretary Zubair ibn-Abdurahman confirmed the receipt of a few thousand dollars from Bin Laden intended to stir up 'the holy war against Karimov's pro-Zionist government'.<sup>30</sup> According to the Ferghana Province Directorate of National Security, Juma Namangani annually received around three million dollars from Osama bin Laden.

The IMU received funding not only from many Islamic organizations around the world, but also from the Uzbek Diaspora in Afghanistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia.<sup>31</sup> This Diaspora consists mainly of wealthy people who fled Central Asia during the 1920s in the early years of the Russian Revolution or during the Sovietization of the region.<sup>32</sup> They supported the IMU cause because they viewed the current regime in Uzbekistan as the continuation of the Communist regime since the current leader, Islam Karimov, is a former Communist leader.

Once the IMU established a relationship with the Taliban Movement drugs became a lucrative source of financing. Relations with al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden also generated substantial amounts of money for their cause. The Pakistani ISI also provided financial support to the IMU and supplied it with arms and military equipment.<sup>33</sup>

The Movement's political leader, Tahir Yuldash, was the organization's main fundraiser. In November of 1995 he visited Peshawar, Pakistan and met with representatives of Islamic organizations from Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Senior ISI officers arranged the meetings, which addressed the allocation of funds for the IMU. Several Turkish organizations and charity foundations in Germany also contributed generously. In April of 1998, Rasul as-Said, a member of the International Islamic Relief Worldwide

TABLE 1. Estimates of IMU funds received from various sources (US million \$)

	Narcotics	Al-Qaeda	Uzbek diaspora and others
1999	5	5	10
2000	7	6	7
2001	4	4	7

Source: Estimates made by various CAR diplomats (these may not be authentic but provide an idea of the magnitude of the resources available to IMU).

organization, wired 250,000 dollars to the account of a Saudi businessman of Uzbek origin, Mahmud al-Balhi.<sup>34</sup> The money was later delivered to Tahir Yuldash.

It is almost impossible to imagine the politicization and radicalization of Uzbekistan's Muslims without outside interference and influence. Islam in Uzbekistan should be viewed more as a cultural phenomenon rather than a political force. The majority of people, who lived behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War and now live under the authoritarian Uzbek regime, have been deprived of uncensored information. In both the Soviet and current Uzbek regimes, radio, print and television have been strongly censored. Although now there is an alternative medium, the Internet, it is still filtered, blocked and censored in Uzbekistan. In both regimes, international news has been sorted, processed and distributed based on the state's foreign and domestic policy interests.

Today's Uzbekistan, which sees the US and Israel as top allies, allows no news coverage of the situation in the Middle East from Muslim media sources such as Al-Jazeera television. In 2003 the Uzbek government refused to broadcast former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad's opening remarks at the Summit meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, of which Uzbekistan is a member.<sup>35</sup>

Muslims of Uzbekistan get very little information about the lives and struggles of Muslims in the Middle East or elsewhere. It is for this reason that a political Islam cannot emerge or survive inside a country that is isolated from politically active Muslim countries and is thus not affected by the developments in those countries.

Another reason would be Uzbekistan's distant geographic location from the world's conflict zones where Muslims and representatives of other religions are or have been involved (the Middle East, the Kashmir and Bosnia). There is no common enemy to be consolidated against. Although Uzbekistan is geographically very close to places like Afghanistan and Iran, none of the two, since Uzbekistan's independence, have been openly involved in conflicts with non-Muslim countries. Since the pull-out of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989, all the conflicts in this country have been intrastate, among various Muslim groups.

The third reason for the Uzbek population's consideration of Islam as more of a cultural phenomenon than political is the relatively low standards of living in Islamic states as compared to those of the West. Uzbeks do not see a political structure based on Islam as a preferred political model. The Taliban, for instance, were the worst of all examples for Uzbeks of what radical Islam can lead to. Preaching the Deobandi version of Islam and claiming its purity and at the same time cultivating hatred in arts, culture and education, the Taliban aroused the irritation of educated nations, such as Uzbeks, famous for their rich Islamic cultural legacy. Uzbeks do not interpret Islam the way the Taliban, Wahhabis, or some other militant movements in the Islamic world do.

Despite the Uzbeks' disapproval of a political Islam, there is also an internal factor for the potential politicization of Islam in Uzbekistan that shouldn't be overlooked—the social and economic factors that the government refuses to acknowledge. The social reasons for radicalizing Islam lie in the general crisis of the system, the difficulties associated with the economic rebuilding of the society, and the lowering of the status of the entire social strata. This leads to persistent disaffection among the people and spurs them to look for a way out of the current situation via the authentic ethnic and religious values that were lost in the Soviet era, and have not been reconstructed in the post-Soviet period.<sup>36</sup>

**Impact of the September 11 Events on Islam in Uzbekistan**

The government of Uzbekistan has become the subject of severe criticism by international human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, as well as by the US Department of State in their annual human rights and religious freedom reports. However, if the first two organizations have unceasingly criticized the Uzbek government, the US government's attitude towards human and religious rights violations in Uzbekistan has been ambiguous. Officially the US government has continued its criticism, but in reality, especially with George Bush's victory in the presidential elections in 2000 and moreover with the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, US–Uzbek relations have strengthened.

Much like the Uzbek government itself, the US currently views security issues to be more important than democracy-building. The US needed an airbase in Uzbekistan for 'Operation Enduring Freedom' in Afghanistan and the Uzbek government provided it. The US needed Uzbekistan's political support in the war against Iraq and Uzbekistan supported its grand ally by continuing to allow the use of the airbase in Khanabad;<sup>37</sup> by sending a group of technical personnel to Iraq; and by publicly voicing its support for US policy in Iraq in the UN and elsewhere. In exchange President Bush invited Islam Karimov to Washington. This invitation had been awaited since the Clinton administration, which the latter kept in reserve to be given as a reward to the Uzbek government for the improvement of its deteriorating human rights record. However the reward came from the Bush administration which prioritized security over democratization.

The war on terror has been widely perceived as a convenient pretext for persecuting Muslims: for Israel in the Middle East, for China in East Turkistan and for Uzbekistan within its own state. It must be stated, however, that groups like the IMU and Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HT) were indeed involved with terrorist activities and anti-Western agitation. The IMU had direct ties to the Taliban and Bin Laden's Al-Qaeda; and HT has distributed leaflets in Uzbekistan containing anti-Semitic and anti-US rhetoric. As a result, the IMU has been declared a terrorist group in countries such as Germany, the US, Australia, Canada and Russia, and HT has been outlawed in Germany. These two groups' actions offered the Karimov regime a convenient means to justify its oppressive methods by linking its opponents and other Islamic groups to the IMU and HT.

There have also been cases when the militia, in pursuit of personal enrichment, revenge, or perhaps because of an unofficial government policy, would plant leaflets calling for the overthrow of the government or drugs in people's pockets, in order to arrest them under the pretext of being members of HT or any other illegal Islamic group.

Much like the change in US attitude toward Uzbekistan, the criticism of the international community against countries persecuting their Muslim populations has also lessened following the September 11 attacks. Security issues began dominating the international community which believed that those countries were after Muslims with connection to terrorist and extremist organizations. The tragedy of 9/11 had its psychological effect. The international community was under the pressure of this effect, feeling a moral obligation to fight Islamic terrorism, on the one hand, to appease the US, which was like a wounded beast, and on the other hand, to prevent a similar tragedy from happening on their soil. Such a policy was not without a failure to distinguish radical Islam from moderate Islam. Some countries joined the US-led international anti-terrorist coalition—whether as a result of being under the political and economic pressure from the US, or in order to strengthen power domestically by eliminating Islamic groups that claimed power. They thought their strategic alliance with the US

would serve as a shield from US criticism for their oppressive domestic policy and human rights abuses—criticism that could prevent them from actively cooperating in combating international terrorism.

Moreover some of these countries were rewarded, and among them was Uzbekistan. In Uzbekistan's case US aid to Uzbekistan tripled in the fiscal year 2002.<sup>38</sup> Even the volume of the US Department of State's International Religious Freedom Report on Uzbekistan got thinner after September 11—with only 13 pages for 2000 and only 11 pages for 2002. However unlikely, the Uzbek government recently has shown more favor to religions other than Islam. Catholics, Jews and Orthodox Russians can practice their religion far more freely than Muslims. There has been no pattern of discrimination against Jews. Synagogues function openly; Hebrew education, Jewish cultural events and the publication of a community newspaper take place undisturbed.<sup>39</sup> The same applies to some Christian groups as well. In my opinion there are two reasons for such an attitude. Firstly, the Uzbek government obviously is trying to appease some European states, the US, Russia and even Israel, is trying with whom Uzbekistan has much better relations than with most of the Islamic states of the Middle East. Secondly, the Uzbek government does not see these groups as a threat to its security since they make up a very small portion (under 5%) of the country's population of 25 million population.

Despite the fact that the 1998 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations provides for the right to establish schools and train clergy, in reality Islamic groups cannot do this unless permitted by the state-controlled Spiritual Directorate for Muslims (the Muftiat), which in turn controls the Islamic hierarchy, the content of imams' sermons and the volume and substance of published Islamic materials. Wearing the hijab for women and traditional Muslim clothing for men, growing beards, visiting a mosque frequently for young men and the calling of azan (call to prayer) through loud speakers are discouraged and sometimes can be even the cause of harassment and persecution by law enforcement officials. There were cases in which young girls were expelled from public schools and universities for wearing the hijab.

Religious groups are prohibited from forming political parties and social movements. The government requires that the state-appointed religious censor approve all religious literature; however, in practice a number of government entities concerned with religion also have considerable veto power. The Central Government's Committee on Religious Affairs (CRA), in accordance with the law, has given the right to publish, import and distribute religious literature solely to registered central offices of religious organizations.

The authorities often suspect Muslims who meet privately to pray or study Islam of being extremists, and they are at risk of arrest. The government is determined to prevent the spread of Hizb-ut-Tahrir, as well as other extremist Islamic groups, which it places under the broad label of 'Wahhabis'. In spring of 2002, President Islam Karimov reaffirmed on national television his intention to eradicate Hizb-ut-Tahrir. Some independent Muslims reject the charge that they are extremists and claim that they are being labeled wrongly. The Qur'an and daily prayers are banned in certain prisons, particularly those incarcerating prisoners believed to be Islamic extremists.<sup>40</sup>

The failure of the Karimov government to distinguish between moderate Islamist forces in Uzbekistan and more radical elements may tend to radicalize larger and larger segments of the religious community. Aleksei Malashenko's examples of Algeria, Turkey, Sudan, Egypt, Indonesia and others—where persecution of political Islam resulted in the radicalization of its followers and the appearance of extremists—suggest that the Uzbek government's continued harsh policy against its Muslims may lead to the destabilization of the situation in society and can even lead to a civil war. Such a

scenario occurred in Algeria in the wake of the 1992 attempt by the authorities to destroy the Islamic Salvation Front, the leading opposition force.<sup>41</sup>

It has been suggested that the main reason for extremism in Uzbekistan is the discontent of the population with overall international politics affecting Muslims in various parts of the world, in the Middle East, and more recently in Afghanistan and Iraq in connection with the US intervention. This explanation falls short because of two reasons: government censorship on media and the absence of a truly independent media bar the population from getting information free of government propaganda. Only less than 1% of the population has access to the Internet, again controlled and monitored by the government. This censorship, as indicated earlier, also prevents the free flow of religious literature into Uzbekistan. Even during the first Afghan war, Uzbeks could not get the same information about the war in neighboring Afghanistan as Muslims elsewhere outside of the USSR had access to and this was due to the Soviet censorship. As a result of Soviet ideological propaganda, Uzbekistan's Muslims viewed Basmachis and Afghan Mujaheddin as enemies, siding instead with the Soviet regime.

Lack of information about Uzbekistan to the rest of the world and the ignorance, or unwillingness of leading international media to pay close attention in their coverage to the lives of Uzbekistan's Muslims also results in a lack of response by most of the world community (except for some states whose governments have supported the Uzbek establishment because it is instrumental for their foreign policy) to the government's oppressive policy, torture and brutality. John Bolender's example of Iraq is particularly applicable to the situation in Uzbekistan. Bolender states that the strict government control of the media and the closed nature of the Iraqi society kept the international community unaware of Saddam Hussein's torture chambers, rape rooms and prison cells for innocent children.<sup>42</sup> In 2002 the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Theo van Boven, visited Uzbekistan, which resulted in a report condemning the systemic use of torture by law enforcement and security officials of the country.

The Muslims of Uzbekistan have very little contact with Muslims in politically active countries like Iran, Pakistan, Palestine and others. The only time when such a dialogue is possible is during the annual Hajj when Muslims from all over the world congregate. Usually around 3000–3500 Uzbek Muslims travel to Mecca for the pilgrimage every year. However, they are always accompanied by either Uzbek security agents or those CRA members who are loyal to the government in order to make sure that members of the Uzbek delegation do not enter into close relationships with other Muslims. This lack of communication between Muslims is present even at the regional level. Since the fall of the Soviet Union and the division of the Central Asian Spiritual Board of Muslims (SADUM) into five independent muftiats, there is even a lack of communication among the Muslims in Central Asia itself.

**Is an Islamic State in Uzbekistan Real?**

It is unlikely that Islamists will come to power in Uzbekistan through a legal procedure since the Uzbek legislation bans the formation of political parties based on religious ideology. The only path to political power for them is violence. The IMU's leadership and its capacity to act were largely damaged as a result of 'Operation Enduring Freedom'. Due to the absence of an exiled charismatic and outspoken Uzbek religious figure, like Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran, it is unlikely that Uzbekistan will follow the scenario of the Iranian Revolution. Many religious leaders have been jailed, tortured or deprived of US/Western support, given the changed post-September 11 situation in the world.

But as Rohan Gunaratna says, the IMU's former role in Uzbekistan may be assumed by the Hizb-ut-Tahrir organization.<sup>43</sup> HT, however, faces a number of obstacles in realizing such a prominent position in Uzbekistan. According to the International Crisis Group, there already seems to have been disagreement within the leadership of the Hizb-ut-Tahrir on the subject of organizational tactics. Hizb-ut-Tahrir has also been subject to factionalism, with at least two cases of fairly significant groups establishing separate political movements independent of HT leadership. Further splits are possible, both for personal reasons,<sup>44</sup> and over political tactics.<sup>45</sup> Also, the HT, like the IMU, lacks a social, economic or political plan for governing the Caliphate they want to restore. Their ideologies are based not on the indigenous Islam of Central Asia, the birthplace of Sufism and nineteenth-century Jadidism, but on imported ideologies.<sup>46</sup>

Another factor that might obstruct the HT goals of establishing an Islamic regime in the region is the dubious role of Islam in Central Asia as a consolidating factor on ethnic and national levels. Nowadays regional, clan, ethnic and tribal interests have precedence over adherence to a common religion. For example, the civil war in Tajikistan took place between Muslims from various regions and clans. In Kazakhstan, to be a member of the Juz (clan) is in practical life incomparably more important than professing Islam. Finally, in the interethnic conflicts in Central Asia (in Ferghana in 1989; in Osh in 1990) those involved were Muslims. Therefore the Uzbek population itself is not ready for an Islamic state and does not see Islam as a factor of unity and political stabilization. Most people confine Islam's role to the religious and cultural sphere and see it as a regulator of relationships between people in everyday life.

**Conclusion**

The international campaign against terrorism has been viewed by Muslims around the world as the new form of human rights abuse with a religious dimension in certain countries. Uzbekistan has been one such country, using the war on terror to support the US in order to avoid criticism for its silencing of both religious and political opposition. The September 11 attacks made US policymakers fearful of the danger of Islamic extremism. The US government's protracted involvement in conflicts in Muslim countries (Afghanistan, Iraq), the Uzbek government's employment of the 'Islamic factor' in silencing any sort of opposition to state policy, radical Islamic groups' frequent resort to violence and their association with terrorist groups, and moderate Islamic groups' sympathy with their cause arising from the failure of the former two to treat them with justice, have blended the once clear division between radical and moderate Islam.

What the Uzbek government fails to understand is that the rise of Islam in Uzbekistan has been an evolutionary process. It is not led by some prominent religious groups or individuals nationwide. Islam has been strongly associated with what the Uzbek

people are and who their ancestors were. Their great history, architecture, scholars, statehood, and traditions are inseparable from their Islamic heritage. This heritage is a part of the national identity which cannot be erased. The only ideology that the Uzbeks knew besides Islam was that of Communism which collided with the former having no historic and spiritual base in the land of Uzbeks, whose religion (Islam) was in hibernation and was awakened by the failure of Communist ideology and with the country's independence. The return to Islam or, more appropriately, the resurgence of Islam is a natural evolutionary process. The government, on the contrary, sees it as a revolutionary phenomenon.

The current government has failed to look for other ways besides the use of torture and violence to counter the extremization of certain strata of the population. President Karimov has failed to follow the slogan he himself coined: 'An ideology should be fought with an ideology'. Failure to provide better living standards and social justice for the population did not push the government to look for alternative ways other than repression and persecution to help lessen the radicalization of Muslims.

Along with the Uzbek government, the responsibility to protect the human rights of the religious part of the population of Uzbekistan also lies with the US, which seems to be repeating the same policy mistake it has made in several instances, that is, cooperating with undemocratic regimes in order to achieve certain foreign policy objectives. Such erroneous policies include competing with the Soviet Union and nurturing the Mujaheddin in late 1970s and early 1980s; providing technical and political support for the Saddam regime during the Iran-Iraq war; and now supporting oppressive governments such as that in Uzbekistan to use their territory and political weight in the region in order to pursue its policy in Afghanistan and Iraq. The potential for a boom-erang effect should have prompted the US government to apply past lessons learned to the current situation. As the RAND Corporation report says:

An extended US presence in Uzbekistan runs a real risk of involving the United States in Uzbekistan's internal cleavages, as well as its tensions with neighboring states. The withdrawal of forces in the near term, combined with the maintenance of close military ties and provision of economic assistance, mitigates that danger but does not remove it completely. US forces, facilities, and personnel may also emerge as an appealing target for anti-Karimov forces insofar as they are seen as bolstering his regime. It is therefore plausible to argue that insofar as conflict in or involving Uzbekistan is likely over the course of the next 10–15 years, US involvement in some form in that conflict has recently become far more probable.<sup>47</sup>

One can, of course, speculate on the extent of US culpability and its motives in exacerbating the deteriorating Uzbek domestic situation through its foreign policy. Is it that Uzbekistan is just one of the many tools generally used by the US in the pursuit of its policy in Afghanistan, Iraq and Central Asia in the dawn of the new Great Game for energy resources, as many experts now believe? Or is it that certain elements in the US administration, who see Islam in general as the menace to their long-term imperial objectives, are willing to undermine it with the hand of Muslim dictators? Or is it just another failure of US officials responsible for designing the country's foreign policy in the Islamic world? The following recommendations to the US government with regards to its policy in Uzbekistan may sound hypocritical because of their seeming support for what has been criticized in this paper. However, they present a long-term

and realistic solution avoiding a coup d'état and violence and leading more to a structural change rather than just a regime change.

Whatever the case may be, the US today needs President Karimov in power for several reasons. Firstly, the Uzbek President perfectly corresponds to the overall cast in a larger play by agreeing to be used by the US. Secondly, the US understands that constant criticism of the Uzbek government's abuse of human rights will only undermine its legitimacy and may lead to the fall of the current regime. Regime collapse would be harmful to US long-term interests in the region, which is turning into a battle field for energy resources among great powers like the US, Russia, Iran, China and some other states.

Thus it may be very hard even for leading CIA analysts to forecast the consequences of a regime change in Uzbekistan. Will it be as velvet as it turned out to be in Georgia? Or will it appear as a great chance for Islamist groups to return to the scene? Who will come to power in Uzbekistan if democratic elections are held under US pressure? Will they be nationalists, Islamists, pro-Russian or pro-Western groups? The first three groups may not be desirable for the US as they would oppose US military presence in the country and would not be as cooperative as the Karimov administration.

These are the questions that perplex the US and prevent it from acting based on its ideals. The best thing for the US in this situation would be to work with President Karimov and have him begin preparing his successor, who could then implement economic and political reform in the country. This may sound cynical but if one faces reality it is possible to understand that it is very naive to demand from a Soviet-born-Communist-turned-nationalist leader that he change his views and practices, even in a decade. Especially concerned with his own security and unclear about the political climate surrounding him, President Karimov will be reluctant to allow for changes. Change requires leaders with a new and different mentality. But such leaders will not come as a result of a revolution or coup d'état which can be brought about by undermining the current Uzbek regime. New leaders of Uzbekistan should have the support of the elite because being a leader is not just about being a good person, learned economist or skilled speaker; it is about being able to hold on to power after gaining it in a society where elite and not democratic institutions rule.

At the same time the US must use the 'carrot and stick' policy if it indeed seeks to gain a better image in the region. Given that the IMU often used Taliban Afghanistan to launch attacks and that the Taliban itself posed a threat to Uzbekistan, the US should make the Uzbek government realize that it is the latter and not the former that should feel indebted for 'Operation Enduring Freedom'. High-ranking US government officials have to stop thanking the Uzbek government and president for their help in fighting international terrorism and providing an air-base. It should rather be the Uzbek government and its president who should thank the US for eliminating a large threat to Uzbekistan and sparing the Uzbek budget from investing in the military, which allowed the government to focus more on the economy. US lawmakers must make aid to Uzbekistan contingent on the improvement of human rights conditions in the country. The US must avoid supporting the Uzbek government's unwillingness to distinguish between moderate and radical Muslims.

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right-Hays Act of 1961 as amended and administered by the American Council for International Education (American Council). The opinions expressed herein are the authors' own and do not necessarily express the views of ECA.

#### NOTES

1. Imperial Russia was ruled by a Tsar before the rise of Lenin's communists.
1. Early Soviet communists.
1. The first of the four orthodox Sunni schools of law. It is distinguished from the other schools through its placing less reliance on mass oral traditions as a source of legal knowledge. The Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence was founded by Abu Hanifa, one of the earliest Muslim scholar-interpreters, to seek new ways of applying Islamic tenets to everyday life. He died in Iraq in AD 767. Abu Hanifa's interpretation of Muslim law was extremely tolerant of differences within Muslim communities. He also separated belief from practice, elevating belief over practice.
1. Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002, p. 26.
1. Community of legal scholars of Islam.
1. Islamic law.
1. Pilgrimage of Muslims to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. One of the five pillars that has to be done once in a lifetime unlike the other pillars that are done daily, weekly or annually. It takes place in the month dhul-hijjah, which is the twelfth month of the Muslim calendar. The definition of the word Hajj is 'to set out with definite purpose'. This 'definite purpose' is to fulfill their duty to God.
1. In February of 1917 the revolutionary events in Russia's capital, Petrograd (now St Petersburg), were quickly repeated in Tashkent, where the Tsarist administration of the governor general was overthrown. In its place, a dual system was established, combining a provisional government with direct Soviet power and completely excluding the native Muslim population from power. Indigenous leaders, including some of the Jadids, attempted to set up an autonomous government in the city of Kokand in the Ferghana Valley, but this attempt was quickly crushed. Following the suppression of autonomy in Kokand, some Jadids and other loosely connected factions began what was called the Basmachi revolt against Soviet rule, which by 1922 had survived the civil war and was asserting greater power over most of Central Asia. For more than a decade, Basmachi guerrilla fighters fiercely resisted the establishment of Soviet rule in parts of Central Asia.
1. 'Holy warriors' (Arabic). Initially used to mean US and Pakistani-trained Afghan rebels who fought against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan between 1979 and 1987.
1. The name was a derogatory Slavic term used by Russian Bolsheviks that the fighters did not apply to themselves.
1. Great Britain was afraid of the spread of Bolshevism/Communism throughout Europe.
1. Former Tsarist armed forces, who after the Tsar's abdication on 15 March 1917, first served the Provisional governments in Russia and later on continued to serve some of the former Tsarist officers in their British-supported struggle for power against the Bolsheviks and the new Soviet state. In contrast, Bolshevik armed forces were called 'Red Army'.
1. Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad*, op. cit., p. 35.
1. The Basmachi revolt eventually was crushed as the civil war in Russia ended and the communists drew away large portions of the Central Asian population with promises of local political autonomy and the potential economic autonomy of Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin's New Economic Policy. The remainder of the Basmachis fled the Soviet Central Asia to neighboring Muslim Northern Afghanistan which was out of the Soviet reach.
1. '... In the spring of 1926 a congress of Turcologists assembled in Baku, under Soviet auspices. One of the decisions was to introduce the Latin in place of the Arabic script in the Turkic languages of the Soviet Union, and in the following years a number of varying Latin scripts were introduced in Central Asia. One aim of this Soviet policy of Romanization was to reduce the influence of Islam; another was no doubt to cut off contact between the Turks of the Soviet Union and those of Turkey, who were still using the Arabic script. The contrary consideration is—that of maintaining contact between the different Turkic peoples—induced some Turkish nationalists to favor the adoption of the Latin script in Turkey. When, eventually, this was done, the Russian countered again by abolishing the Latin script and introducing the Cyrillic, thus reopening the gap between the Soviet Turks and Turkey ...' Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, London: Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 432.

1. The Spiritual Board of Central Asian and Kazakhstan Muslims (SADUM, 1943–1991) concentrated on shaping the 'loyalist attitudes' of the faithful, serving the population with regard to holding religious rites and ceremonies. The Board's inconsistent and conformist position began to be criticized by unofficial spiritual leaders. First to come under their fire were religious rites in which representatives of the Board used to take part. Unofficial Muslim clerks not happy with the subjects taken up by priests (readings from the Qur'an, sermons on neutral topics instead of discussing burning issues), the low standard of the imams' knowledge, their remoteness from the people, etc. At this time unofficial authorities began to emerge.
1. Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad*, op. cit., p. 39.
1. Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia. The Creation of Nations*, New York University Press, 2000, pp. 151–153.
1. Dushman means 'enemy' in Uzbek and was widely used to refer to the Afghan Mujaheddin. The latter was never used in the Soviet Union.
1. Walter Ruby, "Islam vs. Islam in Uzbekistan", *The Jerusalem Post*, 1 December 1991 (accessed December 2003); available online at: Lexis-Nexis.
1. Andrey Grozin, *Islamic Extremism and Its Prospects in the Central Asian Region*, Russian Institute of Diaspora and Integration, 25 December 2000 (accessed April 2003); available online at: <[http://www.uzland.info/2000/december/12\\_26.htm#terrorism](http://www.uzland.info/2000/december/12_26.htm#terrorism)>.
1. "Will Uzbekistan Copy the Scenario of the Iranian Revolution?", *Russian Vremya PO* (Povtorit li Uzbekistan scenariy iranskoy revolyucii?), 16 October 2000 (accessed October 2003); available online at: <<http://www.uzland.info/2000/special38.htm>>.
1. Mikhail Falkov, "The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU): History, Financial Base and Military Structure", *Moscow's Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Islamskoe Dvijenie Uzbekistana (IDU): Istoriya, finansovaya baza i voennaya struktura), Online version in Russian, 24 August 2000 (accessed October 2003); available online at <[http://www.ng.ru/net/2000-08-24/0\\_idu.html](http://www.ng.ru/net/2000-08-24/0_idu.html)>.
1. Ibid.
1. Turkish Miliy Gurush (National Outlook) organization based in Cologne, set up by Turkey's former Prime Minister Erbakan, gave away hundreds of thousands of dollars to the IMU, with Erbakan's consent, to buy arms through Milliy Gurush Secretary Muhammad Kuchak on condition that the IMU would become subordinated to Milliy Gurush and only Erbakan can specify a precise time when the jihad against Uzbekistan would begin. Leading Turkish company Ulker, controlled by Milliy Gurush, generates \$1.5 billion in profits annually. Bakhram Tursunov, "Extremism in Uzbekistan", Conflict Studies Research Centre, British Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, July 2002 (accessed October 2003); available online at: <<http://www.csrc.ac.uk/pdfs/K37-hpz.pdf>>.
1. One of the alleged organizers of those terrorist attacks, a leading IMU member, Zayniddin Askarov, was sentenced to a ten-year imprisonment in 2000. However in November of 2004 he was allowed to meet with a group of journalists representing foreign media during which he said he was forced to give evidence against the IMU leaders, Juma Namangani and Tahir Yuldash, as well as the exiled political opposition leader Muhammad Salih. In reality he said to the journalists, that the terrorist attack was carried out by one of the imams dissatisfied with Karimov's policy. It is still unknown what motivated Askarov to make this confession to the journalists. Why did the prison administration allow him to meet with the journalists? Why didn't the Uzbek security service censor or tap what Askarov told them? Was it some kind of a game within the security apparatus or a move against the president himself?
1. International Religious Freedom Report 2002: Uzbekistan, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, 7 October 2002 (accessed October 2003); available online at: <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2002/13990.htm>>.
1. By the end of 2004 Russia pulled out its border guards from the 881, 6 km-long Pamirs section of the Tajik-Afghan border leaving the security of the border of Tajikistan.
1. The Treaty on Collective Security was signed on 15 May 1992 in Tashkent by presidents of Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Tajikistan, Belarus and Uzbekistan.
1. Interview with an Uzbek intelligence official in 2002.
1. There are about three million ethnic Uzbeks living in the Middle East and South-West Asia. Of them, two million live in Afghanistan and 700 thousand live in Saudi Arabia. "Military and Political Conflicts in Central Asia", Center for Foreign Policy and Analysis, Kazakhstan, 2000 (accessed April 2003); available online at: <[http://www.cvi.kz/text/Experts/Kozhikhov\\_pub/Konflikt\\_Central\\_Asia.htm](http://www.cvi.kz/text/Experts/Kozhikhov_pub/Konflikt_Central_Asia.htm)>.
1. Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad*, op.cit., p. 141.
1. Ibid, pp. 140, 154.

1. Interview with an Uzbek intelligence official in 2002. (IIRW was established in London in 1984. Today it has a large network of branches around the world.)
1. Uzbekistan has been the only country with the Muslim majority that has been consistent in its UN votes with the United States and/or Israel. (Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohammad. Remarks at the Opening of the Tenth Session of the Islamic Summit Conference. Official website of the 10th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference. 16 October 2003 (accessed December 2003); Mahathir Mohammad's speech is available online at: <[http://www.oicsummit2003.org.my/speech\\_03.php](http://www.oicsummit2003.org.my/speech_03.php)>.
1. Aleksei Malashenko, "Islam and Politics in Central Asian States", *Political Islam and Conflicts in Russia and Central Asia*, Journal of Central Asia and the Caucasus, (accessed October 2003); available online at: <<http://www.ca-c.org/dataeng/02.malash.shtml>>.
1. Although initially the airbase was agreed to be provided on a temporary basis, in February of 2004 then-Uzbek Foreign Minister Sadiq Safaev said that Uzbekistan would allow the US to keep military forces there as long as needed for operations in Afghanistan, and would consider a permanent US outpost if the US government wanted one. Safaev said the Uzbek government would make a decision after the Pentagon completed its assessment of US military deployments. "Uzbek Foreign Minister Welcomes US Forces", *The Associated Press*, 21 February 2004 (accessed December 2003); available online at Lexis-Nexis.
1. Tom Malinowski and Acacia Shields, "Uzbekistan's Empty Promises", *The Washington Times*, 12 March 2002 (accessed December 2003); available online at Lexis-Nexis.
1. International Religious Freedom Report 2002: Uzbekistan, US Department of State, op. cit.
1. Ibid.
1. Aleksei Malashenko, "Islam and Politics", op. cit.
1. John Bolender, "Uzbekistan and the US: Sometimes It Really is a War on Islam", *Z Magazine*, 18 October 2003 (accessed December 2003); available online at: <<http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=40&ItemID=4367>>.
1. Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al-Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, p. 171.
1. There seems to have been disagreement already within the leadership of the Hizb-ut-Tahrir on tactics and at least two cases of fairly significant groups establishing separate political movements independent of the Hizb-ut-Tahrir leadership. In early 1997 a group in the Ferghana region of Uzbekistan led by Yu. Akramov left the main body after disputes with the local leadership; a further split in 1999 reportedly took place in the Tashkent branch when a fairly significant group set up its own party, called Hizb-an-Nusra (Party of Victory). 'The IMU and the Hizb-Ut-Tahrir: Implications of the Afghanistan Campaign', *International Crisis Group, Asia Briefing No. 11*, p. 10 30 January 2002, (accessed March 2003); available online at: <<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1760&I%2B1>>.
1. Ibid.
1. Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad*, op. cit., p. 9.
1. Olga Oliker and Thomas Szayna, eds., "Sources of Conflict and Paths to US Involvement", in *Faultlines of Conflict in Central Asia and the South Caucasus: Implications for the U.S. Army*, : RAND Arroyo Center, 2003: Santa Monica, CA, USA, pp. 307-352. <http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1598/MR1598.ch9.pdf>.